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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9289
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2043
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0133
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0143
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0616
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0432
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE 0140
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0299
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 2438
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1825
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000373

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2017
TAGS: PREL PGOV ECON MARR KG
SUBJECT: BAKIYEV-DOLE: POSITIVE MEETING ON RELATIONSHIP
AND BASE

REF: A. BISHKEK 363

¶B. 041418Z APR 07 - IIR 6 955 2047 07

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Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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¶11. (C) SUMMARY. On April 4, Senator Robert Dole held a positive meeting with President Bakiyev and Foreign Minister Karabayev. Bakiyev said that he understands the importance of the Manas Air Base, but the outstanding questions, such as compensation, the September collision, the December 6 shooting incident, and provisions of the agreement, still need to be resolved. He also requested assistance with contracts in Afghanistan and more Base contracts with local businessmen. Senator Dole agreed and said he thought outstanding issues could be resolved quickly and fairly. END SUMMARY.

POSITIVE TONE

¶12. (C) On April 4, Senator Robert Dole met with President Bakiyev and Foreign Minister Karabayev. The meeting began with a couple of jokes, which set the tone for a positive and relaxed half hour. Bakiyev thanked Dole for coming to Kyrgyzstan and said that the Senator's visit was a positive step in promoting and expanding the bilateral relationship. He noted that relations had been close and productive for the past fifteen years. Bakiyev added that Kyrgyz-American cooperation on the Manas Air Base was also a strong component in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

¶13. (C) Senator Dole thanked President Bakiyev and extended

best wishes from President Bush. He said President Bush was interested in a good relationship with Kyrgyzstan, that was getting stronger and better every day. He noted that there have been a few problems, which need to be resolved, but said he was confident they would be settled objectively and fairly. Dole said that the Base is important to Coalition efforts, especially now with the spring offensive. He said he hoped the Base would continue in Kyrgyzstan for some time.

He concluded his opening presentation by applauding Kyrgyzstan's independence, democratic changes, and leadership. He stated that the key word for Kyrgyzstan is stability and that the U.S. wants to strengthen its relationship with Kyrgyzstan and with President Bakiyev, personally.

BAKIYEV: CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

¶4. (C) Bakiyev thanked Dole for his appraisal of the relationship, with which he very much agreed. He said that while the bilateral relationship is growing and expanding, there are some outstanding questions regarding the Base, which need to be resolved. There are questions regarding compensation (which he then stated were mostly resolved), resolution of the collision accident involving "his personal aircraft," the Ivanov shooting incident of December 6, and the provisions of the bilateral base agreement. The President said that we need to work through these problems, and they can and should be resolved between the MFA and the Embassy.

¶5. (C) Bakiyev continued that the bilateral relationship is divided into three areas: economic, political, and military.

On the economic side, the Kyrgyz had repeatedly requested assistance with contracts in Afghanistan, but so far the U.S. had not responded. Here in Kyrgyzstan, the President

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believed that the Base should be concluding more contracts with local providers in the area of food supplies and water. He noted that Kyrgyzstan should be getting more economic dividends from the base; but so far the Kyrgyz "do not feel it." Dole replied that he agreed, and the Ambassador said she would follow up with the Base Commander.

¶6. (C) In the political sphere, Bakiyev said that Kyrgyzstan enjoys more democracy than any country in the former Soviet Union. He granted that reform was necessary, particularly in the judicial system and law enforcement. Bakiyev stated that he was prepared for constitutional reform, but not under pressure of the crowds, as had been done in November. He wanted the U.S. and other countries to be partners with the government and support his constitutional reform effort - "not the other way around." Foreign embassies needed to work with the NGOs and the Opposition and explain democratic principles.

¶7. (C) Regarding military cooperation, Bakiyev said that from the beginning he had said that the Base was important for Coalition efforts in Afghanistan and should stay until the mission was complete. He recalled the incursions in Batken in 1999 and 2000, which were connected to the situation in Afghanistan; that is why Kyrgyzstan is committed to the Base, he said.

¶8. (C) Senator Dole thanked the President for his positive comments about the Manas Air Base and reiterated his hope that differences between the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan can be resolved rapidly. He asked whether it was fair to convey a positive message to President Bush about the Base. Bakiyev responded that he understands the importance of the Base, but the outstanding questions regarding the Base need to be resolved. Dole concluded by saying that he would be following up in the U.S., and Bakiyev said he was counting on it.

COMMENT

¶9. (C) This is the most positive meeting we have had with Bakiyev in a long time, and it is the most positive statement regarding the Base he has made in the last year and a half at least. This meeting tracks with the earlier, separate meetings Ambassador had with Foreign Minister (Reftel A) and Defense Minister (Reftel B) regarding Kyrgyzstan's commitment to the Base. Nevertheless, "questions about the Base," as Bakiyev puts it, remain and need to be resolved as quickly as possible and in a manner that addresses Kyrgyz realities, so that we can ensure that this new and positive commitment regarding the Base remains Kyrgyzstan's national position.

YOVANOVITCH